THE ASIA SOCIETY, INC.

May 3, 1978

CHINA COUNCIL

Professor Akira Iriye
The University of Chicago
Department of History
1126 East 59th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Akira:

Thanks for your letter of April 20. We missed you at the China Council meeting, but understand fully the reasons you could not attend. We shall look forward to your attendance at future meetings -- the next one is scheduled for October 12-14 at the Quail's Roost Conference Center near Durham, North Carolina.

I very much want to keep in touch with your Luce Foundation seminar. Perhaps the next time you plan a trip this way, we might spend a few hours exchanging ideas about the images topic. In the meantime, any materials concerning your seminar and its progress would be gratefully received.

I am sending a copy of your letter to Irv Drasnin. He has been most helpful to us in his present work as China Council Research Fellow -- particularly on this theme concerning "Mutual Perceptions."

Sincerely yours,

Robert B. Oxnam
Program Director

RBO:dl
cc: Irv Drasnin

112 East 64th Street/New York, N.Y. 10021/212 Plaza 1-4210
CHINA COUNCIL offices located on the fifteenth floor at 133 East 58th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022
Cable Address: ASIAHOUSE, NEWYORK

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
1126 EAST 59TH STREET
CHICAGO · ILLINOIS 60637

April 20, 1978

Mr. Robert B. Oxnam
China Council Program Director
The Asia Society, Inc.
112 East 64th Street
New York, New York 10021

Dear Bob:

I regret very much to have to say that circumstances beyond my control are making it impossible for me to come to New York next week. I am involved in our Far Eastern Library's search for a successor to T. H. Tsien, and the interviewing will start next Thursday. I have also been told by the NEH in connection with a summer seminar I will be conducting for them that I must look at all the applicants--nearly fifty--and select twelve of them as participants, all between April 24 and May 1. These duties will compel me to stay here throughout next week.

I do want to say that our Luce Foundation seminar in American-East Asian cultural relations, a multiyear project running through 1982, will, perhaps in 1980 or 1981, be discussing contemporary issues in intercultural relations. When that time comes, I would hope very much that we could undertake something jointly with the China Council. I have expressed such an interest to Don Gillin in connection with his "mutual images" slides, and I am sure there will be much that we can accomplish through cooperation.

Once again, please accept my apologies. And do give my very warm regards to Irv Drasnin whom I haven't seen since we were graduate students together in the late 1950's but whose television documentary on American perceptions of China I admired tremendously.

Sincerely,

Akira Iriye

AI:mak

CBS
NEWS
A Division of CBS Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 975-4321

Dear Joel: September 13, 1978

Your questions in connection with the Snow project are provocative, if not cosmic. I'm not sure anyone has the answers (or, for that matter, has asked the questions) but here are some of my thoughts, for what they're worth.

1. The role of journalists in shaping our perceptions of other societies is probably a question for the reader/viewer as much as for the reporter (or, as one of my colleagues put it, "you should ask the victim, not the perpetrator"). Many of our perceptions are the result of how "news" is defined, of what we choose to cover and not just how we report it. Broadly, journalism is "crisis-oriented." More often than not, especially in the coverage of foreign events, the "big stories" are disasters: flood, famine, earthquake, plane crashes, paralyzing strikes, war and revolution, for examples. The perceptions that result are of societies in trouble, whether the cause is man or nature. There is a pre-occupation with the "unusual," the abberant, the bizarre, the off-beat, the "oddities" of other cultures. Journalism, it seems to me, is not often enough prone to serious analyses of social, economic and political questions of great complexity. There are exceptions, to be sure, but rarely are they "front-page," whether in print or in broadcasting. While there has been progress in recent years, neither the reporter nor the editor is necessarily an "expert," or knowledgeable in the subtleties and nuances of other societies; in short, they often lack the training (including language) to do the job in a sophisticated way. Parenthetically, I think there are probably more qualified China observers now than ever before but they are mostly restricted to newspapers and magazines with their own overseas bureaus, a decided minority.

2. Snow's role in shaping perceptions of China is difficult to estimate. I don't think there's much question but that he was unique, for several reasons.

(1) "Red Star Over China" was a big story, widely read (did it make the "best-seller" lists?). In a sense, not only did it cover history, it made history. At a time when Chiang Kai-shek was telling China, and the world, that Mao Tse-tung was a "dead bandit," Snow found Mao alive, told his story, and showed that he was something more than a renegade. He opened up a whole new dimension of the "China story."

(2) During much of the 1950's and 60's, Snow was the only American journalist with "access" to China. His books and articles were virtually the only first-hand accounts (by an American) that were available.

(3) Snow had access not only to the country, but to the Chinese leadership. He was close to those in power and -- if my memory is correct -- he even, on one occasion, acted as a conduit between the Chinese and the American government on the subject of renewing diplomatic contact.

(4) At least in the bulk of his writings, Snow was not concerned with the abberations or the bizarre, but with substantive political-socio-economic issues and questions. He was a serious "student" of China.

3. All of these things made Snow unique, atypical, and controversial. While he probably managed to transcend many stereotypes and superficialities about China and the Chinese, he may also have helped to form others (for example, "agrarian reformers"?). Snow's access and closeness to the Chinese leadership inevitably raise questions of bias, which in turn inevitably raise questions of how close to "reality" he got in his reporting of China and Chinese events. As Harold Issacs pointed out at the Regional China Council meeting in Boulder (and which I endorse), Snow is not above critical analysis. (Enclosed is an article by Stan Karnow, written for The Atlantic Monthly, giving his view of China reporting in 1973. He includes an interesting reference to Snow near the end of the piece.)

4. I am reluctant to speculate on Snow's success or failure in shaping American attitudes towards China. I don't know enough. There's a need for studying and analyzing Snow's work. There's a need to hear informed, competing points of view regarding its accuracy, impact and effectiveness. It may not always be the case, but there is (or should be) an overlapping between good journalism and good scholarship. The objectives are, or should be (with obvious limitations), the same. You wouldn't accept one source, or similar sources, for a research paper, a dissertation or book. The same is true in journalism (as I would think Snow would agree). We should be seeking out different sources to get as balanced and complete a picture of Snow, man and journalist, as we can. (In terms of the production, that might mean interviews not just with family and friends of Snow but with journalists and perhaps others who were his contemporaries. To do anything less, it seems to me, calls into question our credibility and in the end would be self-defeating.) None of this is to deny Snow his place as an important and courageous journalist, both unique and influential. It shouldn't surprise anyone that he's imperfect-- it should be truly astounding if he weren't.

5. I think the impact of contemporary journalists, and their predecessors, in shaping perceptions of China is considerable. I also think it is important to remember that journalism today as in the past, is only one of many influences on public attitudes about China. Media in general -- both fiction and non-fiction -- and various interest groups which would have us view China one way or another must also be taken into account. Generally, I think journalists attempting to cover China do a better job today, though still not

good enough. As mentioned earlier, I think there are more, better qualified reporters in the field. But access still is a problem -- even for those who are able to cross the border.

The major change since Snow's day, of course, is television. It has not necessarily been a change for the better (again, with some exceptions!). Since 1972, we have -- whether by inclination or by force of circumstance -- focused primarily on the ceremonial, the exotic, the peripheral: state visits, athletic events, acrobats, acupuncture, etc. We too often are exposed to images that, whether positive or negative, are one-dimensional, simplistic and at odds with the complexity of Chinese life. The period immediately following ping-pong and the Nixon visit, in which interest was high and possible coverage exhaustive about anything Chinese, has waned and a more traditional approach has taken over. Again, it is exceedingly difficult to assess the "success or failure" (I'm not sure those are the right terms) of journalists in shaping attitudes. But if recent polls are any indication (Potomac Associates and Harris), two things at least are true: One, there is today a broad public acceptance of The People's Republic of China and a willingness for full diplomatic recognition (quite a change from seven years ago); but, two, considerable confusion about what it would take to achieve that end, i.e., an unwillingness to change our relationship, or defense arrangements, with the government of The Republic of China on Taiwan.

Finally, it may also be useful to remember that, for a good part of his career at least, Snow was a journalist of a different era. This is particularly true of the 1930's-50's, before we were so inundated by instant communications of every type; before we had built up a certain immunity to events of the world (unless, of course, we were affected directly; but even the realities of Viet Nam -- which journalists, particularly in broadcasting, had a powerful role in bringing home to America -- took considerable time to arouse our awareness and responses.)

In addition to the Karnow piece (by no means the only view around), I am -- with great trepidation and with no authoritative claims -- also enclosing a copy of my Master's thesis (oh, how long ago and far away). It's possible that in my study of J.B. Powell there is some useful perspective and relevance for considering Edgar Snow (in addition to the similarity of roots, background and experience, Snow at one time worked for Powell on The China Weekly Review in Shanghai). Vanity compels me to attach some disclaimers: it <u>was</u> researched and written almost twenty years ago and hopefully my writing, if not my thinking, has progressed since then.

I think it would be valuable, and I urge you and/or Kathy to spend some time discussing the questions you've raised with appropriate faculty at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. It seems to me they should be able to help in more ways than one.

As for a moderator, I have no basis for evaluating Norman Cousins. He may be very good, it's just that I've never seen him (or don't remember) -- on television, or off. It does occur to me to consider possible moderators more regionally known in the field of journalism (though, again, I have no knowledge of their aptitude for television) such as Richard Dudman or Chuck Bailey (or someone else you may be aware of). Though it may be premature, I would also urge you to consider minimizing the role of the

moderator and construct narrative from the interviews for use over film and stills. Often, this can be an effective and more interesting technique.

At one and the same time, I feel I've probably given you too much -- and not enough. Nobody ever said this was an easy business. I look forward to helping you in any way I can. Please let me know when you want to explore any of this further. You might want to set aside some time in October when we meet in Kansas City (about which I also await further word.)

Welcome back from the PRC. I look forward to hearing about that, too. All my best.

Sincerely,

Irv Drasnin
Producer

cc: Mr. Terry Lautz, The China Council

Mr. Joel Glassman
Center for International Studies
University of Missouri
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, Missouri 631212

This conference is partially supported by a grant from the Missouri Committee for the Humanities, Inc.. the State based arm of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Thanks are also extended to the Center for International Studies, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

International Relations Council
210 Westport Road
Kansas City, Missouri 64111

CHINESE and AMERICANS: Mutual Perceptions

中美相互了解

Exploring changing American images of China and Chinese images of America from historical, cultural and foreign policy perspectives.

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
October 20 - 21, 1978

A KANSAS CITY CONFERENCE

sponsored by

The International Relations Council
Kansas City, Missouri

The Missouri China Council
St. Louis, Missouri

and

The China Council of the Asia Society
New York, New York

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20

AFTERNOON
William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art
45th and Oak

2:30 p.m. FILM: "MISUNDERSTANDING CHINA"

3:30-5:00 p.m. GUIDED TOUR OF THE NELSON GALLERY'S CHINESE ART COLLECTION

EVENING
International Ballroom
Alameda Plaza Hotel,
Wornall Road and Ward Parkway

6:00 p.m. NO HOST SOCIAL HOUR

7:30 p.m. DINNER

8:30 p.m. CHINA YESTERDAY AND TODAY: AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE
James C. Thomson, Jr., *Curator of the Nieman Foundation, Harvard University*
Comments by Harry S. Jonas, M.D., *Dean, School of Medicine, University of Missouri-Kansas City*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

Meetings and luncheon at
Shawnee Mission East High School
75th and Mission Road

9:00 a.m. HOW CULTURAL VALUES SHAPE OUR PERCEPTIONS
Seymour Fersh, *Director of International Services, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, former Education Director, the Asia Society*
Comments by Cecile M. Franking (Mrs. William G. Wu), *poet and book reviewer*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 (cont.)

10:30 a.m. THE MEDIA AND AMERICAN IMAGES OF CHINA
Irving Drasnin, *Producer, CBS News and Research Fellow, China Council of the Asia Society*
Comments by Mark Poindexter, *News Director. KCUR-FM*

12:00 noon CHINESE LUNCHEON CATERED BY THE PRINCESS GARDEN RESTAURANT

12:45 p.m. FOREIGN POLICY AND MISPERCEPTIONS
Joyce Kallgren, *Center for Chinese Studies, University of California-Berkeley*
Comments by Robert F. Gamer, *Professor of Political Science, University of Missouri-Kansas City*

1:45 p.m. CHANGING CHINESE PERCEPTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES
Jack Chen. *Chinese Cultural Foundation, San Francisco*
Comments by Marshall V. Miller, *Chairman, International Development Committee, Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City*

3:00-4:00 p.m. CHINESE-AMERICAN VIEWS OF CHINA
Tom D. Y. Chin, M.D., *Chairman, Department of Community Health, The University of Kansas Medical Center*
Henry Lee. *Chairman of the Free China Association of Kansas City*
Laurence C. K. Wong, *Associate Director, Biological Sciences Division, Midwest Research Institute*
Moderator: Ernest A. Dick, *Chairman of the Board, Jack Henry, Inc.*

For more information, contact the International Relations Council, 531-0089

Reservations may be made for all or any part of the conference. Make checks payable to and mail to the International Relations Council, 210 Westport Road, Kansas City, Missouri 64111 (531-0089). There is no charge for the lectures, but admission is by reservation only.

Please indicate below the number of reservations you wish to make for each part of the conference.

Friday afternoon: (pay $1.00 Gallery admission at door)
_____ Film showing
_____ Guided tour of Chinese art collection

Friday dinner:
_____ Council members and students $9.75
_____ Non-members $10.75
_____ Lecture only (no charge - space limited)

Saturday morning and afternoon sessions
_____ (no charge)

Saturday lunch:
_____ Council members and students $6.50
_____ Non-members $7.50
_____ Lecture only (no charge)

Name _____ Address _____

Telephone _____

(1)

1.
China in film and television since 1971 (and/or other media).

2. Question of imagery: what kinds of images and in what context have been projected since 1971, and by whom?

→ What affect does such images have; what do they mean? - something worth finding out

What are people seeing in the visual era, the era of television?

(5) 3. What is fantasy and what reality? What is a realistic view of China?

(5) Chinese themselves make distinctions between ideals and realities (re: Shanghai experience).

(5) The happy, contented image = more insidious?

(5) The China Pictorial, New China image; the Friendship Association; the Shirley MacLaine film (Pearl Buck revisited?): is this not as simplistic, condescending as opposite images, and as those of the past?

(5) Still motivated by emotions and urged on by advocates of one kind or another. Whether for Chiang or for Mao, it's China all cleaned up and one-dimensional.

(5) We still seem comfortable with stereotypes, still ready to believe almost anything. Still don't see China much, or meet many Chinese. Mainly what have been exposed to since 1971 is a greater variety of Chinese cooking, as witness the plethora of Szechuan and Hunan restarants.

Witness the Ball piece in the NY Times.

Still an acceptable, a benign racism at work.

(6) A new lobbying effort, this ofthe left, the new imagery, The Frienship Association = which could set us up for a swing back in the other direction. The China Lobby of the right never dead; may be preoccupied with the Panama Canal for the moment, but is there = the ad campaign surrounding Vance's trip to China.

The Forbes Mag ad: Oil for the Lamps of China revisited.

4. Is Misunderstanding China an interesting piece of history or is it relevant, timely?

5. As Doug Murray said at previous meeting: th is perhaps the most difficult project we could undertake because it has the greatest possible pitfalls.

6. Probelm is reaching people. What can we really do. The approach, the mentality, what the hell can we, should we be doing as a council: the targets and the means. Use of the same media that convey the images and the stereotypes in the first place; use of the visual and the audio/audible.

✓ THESIS: More than in any other way, our images, our ideas, our understanding of China are formed by the instruments of popular culture, by media -- for better or worse, there is a universal curriculum, this is the universal curriculum -- the conscious and unconscious ways we, most of us learn what we think we know about China (and a lot of other things except for China there is no reference of shared or common experience against which to keep things in perspective, to judge the reality and fantasy the meeia project) -- and that by and large those images and stereotypes and ideas will be re-formed through the same means, in the same ways (not by books and phamplets and theses and monographs etc) (or scholarly journals)....

- lack of common knowledge provided by learned experience

...that images, ideas, notions become convictions, that become attitudes, that become beliefs which we act upon (which become policy or the background against which policy can be formed and carried out), if not the basis for policy and action, at least make it possible...makes manipulation easier...provides arena/background whatever against which opinions can be formed and manipulated .

new top ✓ [Don't want to discount entirely the possibility that we have a different, more mature, better informed, more reasoned view of China & the Chinese. It's one possibility - how to erase as many of our assumptions as possible.

CHINA COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA (tentative)
Wingspread Conference Center, Racine, Wisconsin, September 15-17, 1977

CHINESE AND AMERICANS: MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS

Thursday Evening, September 15

China Council Business Meeting (for China Council members and associates)

Friday Morning, September 16

American Perceptions — James Townsend, chairman

Changing American Perceptions of China in the 1970s	James Townsend
Perceptions from U.S.-Chinese Scholarly Exchanges	Mary Bullock
Perceptions from U.S.-Chinese Business	Eugene Theroux
China Scholars and American Perceptions of China	~~Harold Isaacs~~ Cohen/Brown
The Press and American Perceptions of China	~~Richard Dudman~~ Kalnow

Friday Afternoon, September 16

Chinese Perceptions — Tu Wei-ming, chairman

The Impact of Recent U.S. China Relations on the Chinese-American Community	Tu Wei-ming
History of PRC Perceptions of the U.S.	Allen Whiting
Chinese-Americans' Visits to China as a Window on PRC Views	Victor Li
Chinese Perceptions of the U.S. in the Early 1970s	Erica Jen

Friday Evening, September 16

Perceptions and the Visual Media — Irv Drasnin, chairman

Misunderstanding China Revisited	Irv Drasnin
Mutual Images in the Popular Media	Donald Gillin

Saturday Morning, September 17

Implications for National and Regional Programs — Robert Oxnam, chairman

Initial Remarks by James Townsend, Tu Wei-ming, and Irv Drasnin
General Discussion

to mount Ch an interesting piece of history or is it relevant timely —

(1) Film + TV since 1971 (+/or other media)

(2) Questions of imagery — how affects what does it mean what people see on the TV or visual ex.

most difficult project bears the greatest possible pitfalls —

what is a realistic image — what is reality — what is "fantasy"

Ch themselves make distinctions between ideals + current realities — (Methodist)

(3) Specific project problem: reality people what can we really do — approach/mentality — what the hell can we/ should we be doing — direct 10-million-dollar feature —

happy, contented image = more insidious?

Ch pictures + new Chins — as condescending, simplistic? Shirley McLaine's film is Pearl Buck revisited — still motivated by emotions —

Comfortable w/stereotypes — Ball piece — stive ready & bel. about anything — acceptable/benign racism still don't see Ch much + need more Chinese then much — mainly what expand to — greater variety of Ch casting —

interlude for Chiang + Mao but problem — all cleared up

where go realistically w/Ch dimension?

The Friendship Room.

— new lobbying effort — as left — the new imagery — sets us up going back in the other direction.

CHINA COUNCIL CONFERENCE: "CHINESE AND AMERICANS: MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS"

Friday, September 16 and Saturday, September 17, 1977
Wingspread Conference Center, Racine, Wisconsin

Friday Morning, September 16

American Perceptions	James Townsend, chairman
American Perceptions of China in the 1970s	James Townsend
Scholarly Exchanges and American Perceptions of China	Mary Bullock
Business Encounters and American Perceptions of China	Eugene Theroux
China Scholars and American Perceptions of China	Richard Baum
The Press and American Perceptions of China	Stanley Karnow

Friday Afternoon, September 16

Chinese Perceptions	Tu Wei-ming, chairman
Recent U.S.-China Relations and the Chinese-American Community	Tu Wei-ming
Changing PRC Perceptions of the U.S.	Allen Whiting
Chinese-Americans' Visits to China as a Window on Chinese Views of the U.S.	Victor Li
Chinese Perceptions of the U.S. in the Early 1970s: A Personal View	Erica Jen

Friday Evening, September 16

Perceptions and the Visual Media	Irv Drasnin, chairman
"Misunderstanding China" Revisited	Irv Drasnin
Mutual Images in the Popular Media	Donald Gillin

Saturday Morning, September 17

Implications for National and Regional Programs	Robert Oxnam, chairman
Initial Remarks	
a. American Perceptions	James Townsend
b. Chinese Perceptions	Tu Wei-ming
c. the Visual Media	Irv Drasnin
General Discussion	

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General Discussion

the universal curriculum
for better or worse.

Thesis: more than in any other way, our ideas, image of Ch formed by instruments of popular culture/media — and will by + large be re-formed in the same way (reinforced if not formed). That images ideas, notions become convictions — then become attitudes — and it we act on them — is most basis for policy + action, at least make it possible manipulation — background against which action formed + manipulated.

erosion and
warping — of us
way we/most of us
learn what we
think we know.

WINGSPREAD® brief

SEPTEMBER 1977

A WINGSPREAD CONFERENCE BRIEF IN TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS

CHINESE AND AMERICANS: MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS

The recent era of detente in United States-China relations has not produced a complete about-face in American images of China nor in Chinese images of America. Instead, despite the shift in relations, complex and often conflicting sets of images persist on both sides of the Pacific. Earlier hostile perceptions still persist, often in more subtle forms, alongside the newer images derived from Sino-American rapprochement and exchanges. This melange of imagery has important implications for future relations between the United States and China.

These were among the important conclusions derived from the September 1977 Wingspread Conference involving businessmen, education experts, journalists, and scholars concerned with Chinese affairs. The conference highlighted the insights of those with extensive personal experience in China — particularly Chinese-American scholars and various exchange program administrators.

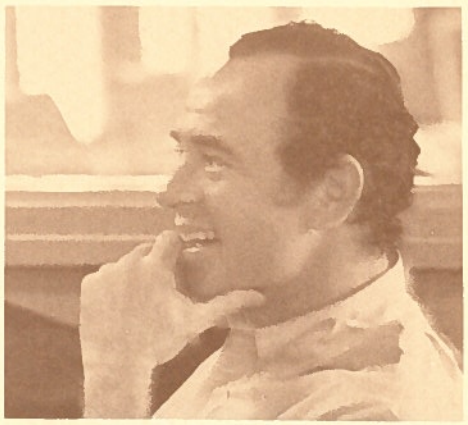
The participants also suggested a variety of public education programs to further explore this mutual perceptions theme including interviews with American businessmen and technicians who have had lengthy visits in China, a filmstrip on the evolution of stereotypes in America and China, and public conferences about the many-faceted perceptions in both societies today.

The conference was sponsored by the China Council of The Asia Society in cooperation with The Johnson Foundation. The China Council is a national program for adult public education on China and U.S.-China relations funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Henry Luce Foundation, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The Council sponsors regional programs on a nationwide basis, a variety of media-related activities, and a series of thematic publications and projects on issues concerning Chinese civilization and contemporary affairs.

Robert Oxnam, Program Director of The Asia Society's China Council, began the conference by describing its purposes:

- to explore the shifting perceptions on both sides of the Sino-American relationship — Chinese images of America and American images of China — in terms of elite and public outlooks.

A. Doak Barnett, Co-Chairman, The China Council; Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution.



Charles W. Bailey, Co-Chairman, The China Council; Editor, Minneapolis Tribune.

- to probe beyond the surface indications of changing U.S.-China relations in the 1970s — beyond the diplomatic meetings, the news headlines, the reports of "three-week experts" — to the tougher question of "how much has really changed in our images and perceptions of one another?"

- to examine, in the context of both American and Chinese societies, the sources of perceptions and the ways in which perceptions set the framework for policy-making.

- to define ways in which the China Council can develop projects and programs around this mutual perceptions theme in its regional and national activities.

AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA

James Townsend, Professor of Political Science at the University of Washington, led a discussion on images of China held by American scientists, businessmen, scholars, and journalists. Noting the comparative nature of perceptions, he asked to what extent American images of China are reflections of our views of ourselves and our society.

- Mary Bullock, Staff Director of the Committee on Scholarly Communications with the People's Republic of China, observed that American scientists' views of China are conditioned by more general views of science and international affairs. American scientists tend to be enthusiastic internationalists and believe that science has the power to overcome political barriers. Many appreciate that China is technologically a developing country, while others are somewhat paternalistic toward China's scientific developments and believe that Chinese science has little to offer the West.

- Michael Lampton, Ohio State University, concluded from a recent survey that scientists' perceptions changed very little after a visit to the PRC. Before visiting China, most viewed China as a stable society where coercion was only of moderate importance, and such attitudes were not radically altered but only reinforced by the experience of seeing China first-hand.

- In contrast with the early 1970s, the business community is now more realistic about the potential for commerce with China and better informed about those sectors of the Chinese economy which offer significant trade opportunities, according to Eugene Theroux, a lawyer with Baker & McKenzie in Washington, D.C. Businessmen have brought back a broad range of images, both positive and negative, from their experiences in China. Stephanie Green, National Council for U.S.-China Trade, noted that American technicians spending prolonged periods in China returned with a strong sense of personal warmth and admiration for the Chinese, as well as frustration with Chinese bureaucracy.

- Scholars perceive different aspects of Chinese reality depending on their political and academic outlooks. Richard Baum, University of California - Los Angeles, agreed that the three-week China trip selectively reinforces pre-existing perceptions, but noted that many academics are now taking a second more critical look at China. James Townsend observed that China scholars have lost their one-time monopoly as "China experts" since a broad range of people can now speak with authority about current developments in the PRC.

- Stanley Karnow, International Writers Service, said that coverage of China in the American press is episodic and unsystematic because it focuses primarily on dramatic, immediate events. Like many others, journalists are becoming more skeptical about what they see in China and some are asking probing questions such as how the human rights issue applies to China.

CHINESE PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICA

Tu Wei-ming, Professor of History at University of California-Berkeley, introduced the "complex, sensitive, and elusive" subject of perceptions held by Chinese and Chinese-Americans. Perceptions must be understood in the context of history and events, and in a world faced with increasing interdependency but growing fragmentation. Decentralization, he noted, is often expressed through a heightened sense of ethnicity.

American access to Chinese images is limited, but recent emigres and Chinese-American visitors offer one key to unlocking the perceptions puzzle. Participants made these observations:

- Erica Jen, a Chinese-American student who lived in China, 1972-73, said that the Chinese have very mixed images of America and Americans. They see the United States as a complex and dynamic society, but one which is backward in terms of human relations. The Chinese she knew admired American independence and resourcefulness, and were curious about American approaches to child-rearing and other social customs.

- Erica Jen, who studied at Peking University and spent several months working in a factory and living on a commune, commented that the Chinese see economic exploitation, racism, and sexism as the dominant issues of American culture. Viewing the United States through the lenses of Marxist class-analysis, Chinese give great importance to the labor and student movements in America. At the same time, they believe that the student movement is poorly organized and the American government is deceptive.

- Allen Whiting, University of Michigan, noted that we know little about Chinese perceptions of Americans, and suggested that perceptions held by the political elite and the masses may differ in China. A review of both the People's Daily (during 1976-77) and Chinese children's cartoon booklets reflected a continued high level of anti-American imagery despite the public endorsement of detente with the United States.

Tu Wei-ming, Professor of History, University of California-Berkeley; Erica Jen, Department of Applied Mathematics, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

- President Nixon's historic trip to China in 1972 had less effect on Chinese perceptions than Americans might think. Relatively little attention was given to the trip in advance and the Chinese people were cautioned not to expect too much from the visit.

Chinese-Americans bring a special vantage point to the subject of perceptions because they are both involved in the process of creating perceptions and are observers of the results. Tu Wei-ming, Erica Jen, Victor Li, and Samuel Chu made the following comments:

- A new sense of Chinese-American identity has emerged in the last ten years, stemming in part from the American public's discovery of a "new China." But Chinese-American attitudes run the gamut from highly politicized views in many Chinatowns (with splits between pro-Taiwan and pro-PRC camps) to more apolitical outlooks of some Asian-American academics (80% of whom are in the sciences).
- Many Chinese-Americans have become enthusiastic cultural ambassadors after visiting China, but for some the renewed sense of cultural pride is mixed with guilt about remaining in America. For Chinese-Americans the future holds some difficult problems including those of immigration and reunification of families.
- The PRC characterizes Chinese in the U.S. as "American nationals of Chinese descent" rather than "overseas Chinese," said Victor Li. When they travel to China, Chinese-Americans are handled by a bureaucracy which is separate from that which handles other American visitors.

PERCEPTIONS AND THE VISUAL MEDIA

Irv Drasnin, producer of the widely-acclaimed CBS documentary "Misunderstanding China," chaired a session on the role of visual media in America. Perceptions, he said, are heavily influenced and even shaped by the instruments of popular culture. The media's role in the perceptions process is crucial, but American audiences are not yet well-prepared for a debate on the important issues related to China.

Stephanie R. Green, Assistant Editor, The China Business Review, the National Council for United States-China Trade; Robert B. Oxnam, Program Director, The China Council of The Asia Society; Charles Bailey, Co-Chairman of The China Council; Editor, Minneapolis Tribune.

Mary Brown Bullock, Staff Director, Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China; James R. Townsend, Professor of Political Science, University of Washington; Eugene A. Theroux, Partner, Baker and McKenzie, Washington, D.C.

Irv Drasnin, Producer, CBS News

Victor H. Li, Professor of Law, Stanford University.

Stanley Karnow, Editor, International Writers Service.

Phillips Talbot, President, The Asia Society.

Drasnin emphasized the point that visual media presents very narrow slices of Chinese "reality" and that most coverage focuses on ceremonies, official visits, or sports. Many films and television programs have projected an uncritical, one-dimensional view of "New China" to replace an equally unobjective Cold War outlook. Cliches and stereotypes, both old and new, continue to dominate much of what is produced.

Donald Gillin, Vassar College, presented a provocative historical review of Chinese and American images from newspapers, magazines, and movies. A recurrent American image has been of the Fu Manchu genre. From the Chinese viewpoint, the American plutocrat and gangster are common negative stereotypes. The Statue of Liberty has been a frequent positive symbol in Chinese imagery, often sullied by scoundrels hiding under her skirts or imprisoning her behind bars.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS

At the Wingspread Conference, members of the China Council agreed on the need to increase public awareness of Chinese and American perceptions. Many projects are well suited for regional activities, through the seven affiliated regional China councils which are located in southern Arizona, Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Seattle, and Texas. The China Council will collaborate with ongoing projects in other regions as well, to distill insights and disseminate the results as broadly as possible.

The China Council has recently assisted in developing a survey of American public opinion on Sino-American relations, which has been issued by the Potomac Associates' Policy Perspective series, "The United States and China: American Perceptions and Future Alternatives." Another project already underway, sponsored by the Texas China Council, is a photographic essay depicting the Chinese experience in Texas.

Richard Baum, Professor of Political Science, University of California-Los Angeles.

Possibilities for further regional and national programs on mutual perceptions include the following:

- Public conferences to discuss popular and official images that Chinese hold of Americans, drawing on published materials, visual imagery, and reports from recent emigres and Chinese-American visitors. On the American side, panelists may focus on the contrasting and varied images of China which have been presented in the American media by different visitors.
- Public regional seminars to explore Chinese-American perceptions, seeking to better understand the effect of increased access to China on Asian-American communities in this country.
- Public opinion polls to update Harold Isaacs' path-breaking study, Scratches on Our Minds (1956), and to analyze the perceptual basis for American opinions on Sino-American relations. Such a survey could help to determine the degree to which perceptions have changed in recent years and whether regional variations are increasing.
- A visual history of Sino-American mutual perceptions, based on cartoons, films, and other materials, which could result in filmstrips, television productions, and various publications.
- Articles based on the individual and collective experiences of businessmen, scientists, diplomats, scholars, and journalists who have been to China, to assess the impact of the "China trip" on their attitudes. Regional councils might conduct local surveys of businessmen, technicians, and scientists who have had extensive contact with Chinese in the PRC as well as in Hong Kong and Taiwan, to better understand how perceptions are formed and changed as the result of personal interaction.
- An update of the 1972 film "Misunderstanding China" through videotaped panel discussions following the film on local television stations, to assess the experiences of the past five years and to identify new stereotypes as well as recurrent old ones.
- The long-term possibility of a book to summarize Chinese views of America, American views of China, the Chinese-American experience, and implications for public opinion and foreign policy.

A. Doak Barnett, Co-Chairman, The China Council; Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution; Robert W. Barnett, Director, Washington Center of The Asia Society; Ross Terrill, Associate Professor of Government, Harvard University.

WINGSPREAD®

The building Frank Lloyd Wright called Wingspread, situated on a rolling prairie site just north of Racine, Wisconsin, was designed in 1938 as a residence for the Johnson family. In 1960, through the gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Johnson, it became the headquarters of The Johnson Foundation and began its career as an educational conference center.

In the years since, it has been the setting for many conferences and meetings dealing with subjects of regional, national, and international interest. It is the hope of the Foundation's trustees that Wingspread will take its place increasingly as a national institution devoted to the free exchange of ideas among people.

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